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The importance of case reports

Importância dos relatos de casos

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eOftalmo is a quarterly, bilingual (Portuguese and English) scientific publication by the Brazilian Council of Ophthalmology (CBO) aimed at ophthalmologists and other healthcare professionals. Its objective is to publish clinical case reports in addition to other articles such as literature reviews and updates.

Considering the educational role of the CBO and in view of **eOftalmo**'s mission to stimulate students, professionals, and administrators in the medical-ophthalmological field to learn about scientific topics of interest in Ophthalmology and to enable exchanges among educational institutions, health care services, and specialized societies, the importance of publishing clinical cases is clearly noted.

Clinical case reports are a fast and effective means of spreading medical information because these articles disseminate conducts for several conditions and attract interest from doctors in training as well as physicians in clinical practice[1].

The introduction of a clinical case is interesting by itself and an effective way to review important topics related to the case.

In 2013, a proposal called CARE (CAse REport) was made to standardize clinical case reports to improve their integrity and transparency. At **eOftalmo**, we encourage authors to present clinical cases following these recommendations because they give us a solid structure for case-based learning in medical education[2,3].

So, what should the structure of a clinical case report be like?

It should have a maximum of 2,000 words and feature introduction, case report, discussion, and references. This follows the structure of a scientific article, with the case description corresponding to the methods section. We also have a structured abstract of up to 200 words, descriptors, and references (limited to 30).

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Received on: July 5, 2020. **Accepted on:** July 6, 2020.
Funding: The author declares there is none. **Conflicts of interest:** The author declares there is none.
How to cite: Carvalho K. The importance of case reports. eOftalmo. 2020;6(1):1-2.
DOI: 10.17545/eOftalmo/2020.0001

The title of the case report should be precise, brief, clear, and motivating to the reader. We advise avoiding redundant terms such as "case report" or "review of."

The introduction should focus on the topic and explain the reason for which the case is being reported. It should include a sufficiently comprehensive review of the literature to allow the author to relate the context of the case to previously published data, but should not be exaggerated[4].

The case report should describe the case chronologically and with sufficient data for readers to establish their own hypotheses about it. Authors should present the effect of the treatment, any unforeseen effects, the final outcome, any other proposed treatment, and the status of the patient at the time the report was written.

As expected, the discussion section compares the case with data present in the published literature and features recommendations arising from the report.

The conclusion should be brief and show the applicability of recent knowledge to clinical practice. As in other scientific articles, it must be justified[5]. This section is important and should offer recommendations for the improvement of clinical care. Case reports are the first line of evidence in the documentation of clinical observations in the medical literature[6].

While preparing a clinical case report, the following factors should be combined: clinical observation, logical thinking, and the creative ability to attract readers' attention or to make colleagues want to know more about a specific case. Proper preparation of the clinical case and a clear conclusion are essential for publication.

Currently, publishing clinical cases reports is considered an academic duty during medical training, especially during residency, with several programs requiring the publication of scientific work and a final thesis as a mandatory item for the completion of medical residency.

In addition to academic relevance, the experience of writing a case report also enhances the writing skills of resident physicians, thereby preparing them for practical life[6].

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